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Subject: "CHRISTMAS CANDY QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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You don't have to be a dentist to know which tooth grows large at Christmas-time. Every mother knows how large the family sweet tooth grows at this time of year.

The sweet tooth is to have special attention today because the mail this week has brought in so many questions about candy for Christmas.

Here's a familiar question from a mother. She writes: "What is the best kind of candy for younger children?"

The reply to this question comes from Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Mrs. Carpenter says: "The better candies for children are not too sweet and rich and contain other valuable food materials along with sugar. Much of the candy all right for grown-ups is pretty hard on young tummies. Candy heavy with sugar, fat, chocolate, nuts or coconut is very likely to be too rich for youngsters. Of course, no candy is good for a child who eats too much or who eats between meals and spoils his appetite for food he needs more.

"Here are some of the candies on the approved list for children. First, popcorn balls. Popcorn balls are not too sweet and rich. The popcorn distributes the candy mixture so the child doesn't eat so much sugar at a time. Popcorn itself is one of the whole grains so good for children. And the molasses or cane or sorghum sirup in the candy mixture is good for children because it contains iron and calcium which children need.

"Other candies made of molasses, cane sirup, and sorghum sirup are also good for children because of the minerals in these sirups.

"Dried fruit candies are another excellent choice for youngsters. Confections made of dried fruit are not too sweet. To be sure they contain the natural fruit sugar which children like, but they contain other things of even more value. Dried fruits are rich in minerals, especially iron. (And many children would benefit from more iron in their food.) Dried fruits also contain some mild acid and roughage to give them slight laxative properties. Christmas candy made of dried prunes, apricots, dates, figs, raisins, and currants, is always a good choice for children.

"So are all other confections made with fruit. Candied apples on a stick are easy to make, handsome to look at, and very good for children. To make them you stick a raw apple on the sharp point of a wooden skewer. Then you dip the apple in sugar sirup and let the sirup chill into a clear glazed cover over the apple. Turkish paste or Turkish delight, whichever you prefer to call it -- the candy made with fruit juice and gelatin is another good one for children. Candied fruit of all kinds is on the list, too.

"The chief reason why stick candy, fruit drops, rock candy and lollipops go on the list for children is that they are hard. They are so hard children eat them slowly and take in only a little sugar at a time."

The best candy for children, then, includes popcorn balls and other candies made of whole-grain cereals; candy made of molasses or cane or sorghum sirup; fruit candy, especially dried fruit candy; gelatin candy; and candy so hard children eat it slowly.

Now, then, here's a second question concerning children and candy: "Will you suggest some candy children can make?"

Mrs. Fanny Yeatman of the Bureau of Home Economics suggests peanut brittle,

popcorn balls, and Parisian sweets as three kinds of candy easy enough for young cooks.

Parisian sweets are probably the easiest of all candy to make. You don't even have to cook them. All you need to make Parisian sweets is a meat chopper and a half pound of figs, a half pound of dried apricots or seedless raisins, and a little confectioners' sugar to roll the candy in. Wash and pick over the dried fruit. Put it through a meat chopper using the medium knife. Then form the mixture into balls and roll them in sugar. Store in a tin box or a tight jar. If you wish, you can grind a half pound of nut meats with the dried fruit. But for the younger children, the fruit alone is better.

Here's how to make easy nut brittle. Put 2 cups granulated sugar in a clean smooth frying pan and heat it gradually while you stir with the bowl of the spoon. When the sugar heats into a golden sirup, remove it from the fire and quickly add a fourth teaspoon of salt; a fourth teaspoon of soda; and a teaspoon of vanilla. Pour the hot mixture over a layer of nuts in a greased pan. When the brittle is cold, crack it into small pieces. The only trick in making is to keep the sugar stirring as it heats and take it off the fire the moment it turns gold in color.

Now here are a couple of candy-making problems to answer. The first is about candied orange or grapefruit peel -- "What makes candied grapefruit peel tough and hard?"

Too much sugar and too long cooking will make candied peel tough.

Here's the last question: "What makes fudge grainy?"

The answer is: Stirring while the fudge mixture is hot. Mrs. Yeatman suggests that you begin making fudge by heating the sugar and chocolate together in a double boiler over hot water. Stir as the chocolate melts. Then add milk or cream. Cook in a good-sized pan over the direct flame with no stirring. Use a large enough pan so the fudge won't boil over as it heats. And have the flame so low the fudge is in no danger of scorching on the bottom. With a low flame you won't need to stir. To tell the fudge is done you drop a little in cold water. If it forms a soft ball, take it off the fire and let it cool without stirring. When it cools to lukewarm, add salt, vanilla and butter and then stir until it is creamy.

That's all the questions today. More next Tuesday.

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